

Snakes in the Field

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Snakes in the Field

by [WispScribbles](#)

Summary

“Johnny?” Ghost pulled off his gloves, kneeling at the bedside. He could feel the heat on his palm before he even made contact with the clammy skin. His fingers found the pulse point, and his own heart beat faster. It was weak. It was too damn weak. “Fuck!”

Within seconds he had scooped Soap into his arms and started practically running down the barracks halls. People jumped out of the way, faces shocked at the unusual sight. Murmurs drowned in the sound of blood rushing in his ears.

“Hang in there, Johnny. Stay with me now.”

Soap gets poisoned. Ghost takes it as well as you'd expect.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

The mission had been a complete bust.

Price was practically fuming in his seat opposite Soap, as the helo lifted off. The usually collected captain muttered under his breath, and even Gaz was giving the man space, shooting occasional worried looks in his direction.

Everyone was feeling beat down. It had seemed like they'd finally gotten a real lead on Makarov, after months of playing cat and mouse with the elusive Russian. It was a game, and their target was the one controlling it.

This intel should have been the turning point, their first chance at gaining the upper hand; instead it ended up being nothing but a wild goose chase once again.

Now they were all bruised and exhausted, with nothing to show for it.

Shifting in his seat, Soap let out a small hiss as his side stung from the pull. The bloodied gauze packing his new stab wound was a reminder of the only interesting information they had gathered: A new kind of soldier had entered the fray.

Dressed in all black from head to toe, including a plain mask, the hostile had moved like a snake poised to strike. Soap had been taken aback by the vicious fighting style that met him. Unlike the other enemies taking on the 141, there was no doubt that this was no common foot soldier, but a specially trained elite. If it hadn't been for Ghost's quick reaction, Soap would currently be lying in a pool of his own blood on a cold cement floor, never to wake.

Still, it would've been nice if the lieutenant had shot the bastard *before* one of those fancy knives had sliced open his side. He'd joked as much when the large man was stemming the bleeding, earning him an eye

roll and too-tight bandages.

Despite acting extremely unbothered by the whole affair, Ghost would occasionally look over at the sergeant from the seat beside him. If he didn't know better, Soap was tempted to call the emotion resting in those dark eyes 'concern'.

It was unneeded, luckily. Compared to many of his scrapes through the years, this one was just a flesh wound. Painful, but very much non-lethal.

Price muttered something that sounded suspiciously like "Makarov", and Soap decided he couldn't stand the defeated atmosphere that had settled over their group any longer.

"So, I'm thinkin' a vacation soon sounds braw. Team bonding somewhere warm?"

Price didn't reward him with an answer, but rather a glare, which softened almost imperceptibly when his gaze landed on the sergeant. Soap figured he looked a right mess, if it was enough to rattle the captain's anger.

Luckily Gaz took pity on his poor attempt at small-talk before the silence became too poignant.

"Agreed, mate. I'd say we've earned the whole nine yards, some five-star hotel in the Bahamas or something."

"Aye, with a pool," Soap chuckled, before tilting his head towards Ghost. The skull-framed eyes staring back at him did nothing to deter him, as usual: "Do ye wear the mask with swim trunks, Lt.?"

The visual had Gaz chuckling, which he stopped instantly when a deadly stare was directed at him. Price's posture loosened ever so slightly, moustache twitching.

"Why do scuba divers fall backwards out of the boat when entering the water?" The masked man asked, expertly avoiding answering Soap's question.

Soap groaned, unable to keep his lips from pulling into a small smile. "Why?"

"If they fell forwards, they'd hit the boat."

A chorus of groans followed this time, and Ghost's eyes crinkled in amusement. The genuine laugh that left Soap turned into a wince, another jolt of fire shooting up from his side.

"Get that looked at as soon as we get back, son," said Price, eyebrows furrowing back up, to Soap's disappointment. "We'll do the brief without you."

"I'm fine, cap-

"That's an order."

"Aye, sir."

Low chatter had started from the others, tension eased sufficiently. Pleased, Soap allowed himself to sag back into his seat. He could feel

eyes boring into him, as he closed his own to relieve his heavy head.

A gloved hand was shaking him gently, and Soap blearily woke to the surprisingly comforting sight of a human skull.

“Mornin’ Ghost.”

“We’re back at base.”

Blinking the blur out of his eyes, he found that the helo was standing still, his teammates bustling around him. Usually, the descent back onto land would be enough to wake him. Maybe he was a bit worse off than he had originally thought.

“Thanks fer the wakeup,” he smiled at his superior, clearing his throat of its gravel.

“Get to medical.”

“Will do.”

He was beginning to think that was probably a good idea after all, so he stood gingerly. Ghost was watching him closely.

“Amnae gonna break, Lt.” He patted the other man’s shoulder. “Tell me about the brief afterwards, aye?”

Ghost nodded. After a last glance at the smaller man before him, the lieutenant must've deemed him capable of the short trip to medical, because he then left with the rest of the group.

Soap breathed in deep through his nose, before beginning his own arduous trek. Pain meds at the end of the tunnel was one hell of a motivator.

Barbara tutted when she saw him. Part of him had hoped she wasn't on duty today, as the middle aged woman was starting to get very strict about how often he landed himself in the base hospital.

"MacTavish. Why am I not surprised?"

"Hiya Babs. Ye look bonnie today," he easily greeted. "Doing somethin' new with yer hair or-"

"Sit down, you injury-prone idiot."

"Yes, madam."

After stitching up the laceration and getting some painkillers in him, the woman stood back with a frown, discarding her bloodied gloves. Soap squirmed slightly under her searching gaze.

"You look peaky, John."

"Got stabbed. I'd say that's a fair excuse, aye?"

“I’ve seen you try to walk off far worse,” she accused.

“Just tired, s’all.” Soap rubbed a hand over his face. “This Makarov business is runnin’ us all ragged.”

“Rest. The wound should be fine, if you rest.” A friendly hand patted his shoulder. “I better not see you here again anytime soon.”

“What if I wanna see ye, Babs?” he asked with a winning smile. Barbara scoffed.

“You don’t have to nearly die for that to happen.”

“Knew ye liked me.”

“Stockholm syndrome. I’m stuck with you constantly.”

“Ach, isnae that often-”

“Third time this year, John. It’s february.” She pinned him with a stern look. “Go rest.”

With that she left the room, and Soap stood, collecting his things before he headed out.

Initially, he’d planned on going to the mess hall where the team would be gathering after the briefing. There he could hear what he’d missed,

and satiate the rumbling of his belly.

However, the exhaustion was truly taking hold as he walked, and for some reason the thought of food brought along a wave of nausea, so he redirected his course. If anyone needed him, they could find him in his bedroom. He had orders to rest, after all.

Shedding the tactical gear in a pile on his floor, he let laziness win, leaving it for tomorrow. He changed into sweatpants and a t-shirt carefully, mindful of the still-sore wound, before he climbed into bed. It was way too early to sleep, but blood loss tended to have that effect, he reasoned to himself.

Sleep took him quick.

The next morning, he didn't wake.

Ghost stared at the empty chair next to him, while trying to ignore the churning anxiety in his gut.

"Ghost?"

He looked up, attempting to hide how Price's question startled him. The older man watched him expectantly. Ghost hadn't been listening.

"Can you repeat?" he asked, happy for the mask covering his embarrassed flush. It was just the team in the morning meeting, but he was still supposed to act like the lieutenant he was, rather than pine over a missing Scotsman.

Price sighed.

“I was asking if you saw enough of the soldier’s fighting style to guess their purpose?”

Right. The sneaky bastard that got the jump on Soap. The meeting yesterday had been short, an agreement made to go properly through the mission details the next morning (when Soap could participate).

At first both he and Price had been annoyed at the sergeant’s absence. They’d gone ahead and started the meeting anyway, since the man sometimes ran late.

Anger was turning to worry. Soap was sometimes distracted, and he certainly had a healthy disrespect for rules and authority, but this was unlike him.

And then there was the way he had looked yesterday. The glaze in his eyes...

“Didn’t see much, sir,” he said, forcing his attention back to the matter at hand. “Bastard had downed Soap when I entered the room, I had to act quick. But what I saw... Those were some skillful moves. MacTavish doesn’t go down easy, but this soldier managed it in seconds.”

The captain was chewing at his bottom lip, deep in thought.

“We need to find out more,” he grumbled. “Which we might be able to if Soap was here, since he actually fought the guy.”

“I went to medical after dinner last night,” Gaz piped up. “When he didn’t join us I got worried. Barbara said he was fine, but tired. Maybe

he forgot to set an alarm?”

“I’ll fetch him,” Ghost volunteered. Price gave him an inquisitive look at the fast response, but slowly nodded.

“Alright. We’ll take a break until you’re back.”

Chairs scraped and voices rose as the others took advantage of the free time. Gaz nodded at him as he left, and Ghost saw some of his own worry reflected back at him.

Odds were that Soap was snoozing away, meeting forgotten. Ghost would give an angry lecture, fueled by the stress the sergeant had caused this morning, and then they would go about their day.

There was no response when he knocked on the door. He knocked a second time, but continued to be met with nothing.

“I’m coming in, sergeant,” Ghost warned loudly. “You better be decent.”

A sigh of relief escaped him when he saw the figure in the bed. Seemed he was right.

“Rise and shine, MacTavish.”

He was across the room in a few strides, sidestepping the messy pile of clothes on the floor.

Soap didn't as much as stir at his call. Relief curled up and died as quickly as it came, landing instead as cold dread in his chest.

A sheen of sweat was covering the man in the bed, darkening his shirt in large patches. His brow was pinched in pain, despite clearly not being in the waking world, and shivers were wracking his pale body.

"Johnny?" Ghost pulled off his gloves, kneeling at the bedside. He could feel the heat on his palm before he even made contact with the clammy skin. His fingers found the pulse point, and his own heart beat faster. It was weak. It was too damn weak. "*Fuck!*"

Within seconds he had scooped Soap into his arms and started practically running down the barracks halls. People jumped out of the way, faces shocked at the unusual sight. Murmurs drowned in the sound of blood rushing in his ears.

"Hang in there, Johnny. Stay with me now."

He burst through the doors to medical, startling the staff, one of them spilling their morning coffee. Wildly scanning the people before him, his gaze landed on a familiar doctor.

"Barbara." The desperation in his voice sounded strange, even to him. "Help him."

Barbara's eyes widened at the sight of the limp form in Ghost's arms.

"Quick, on the bed." She guided him to the nearest room, already darting to fetch equipment and yelling orders at the people around her.

Ghost softly rested his precious cargo on the white sheets, absentmindedly fixing a stray hair sticking to Johnny's forehead. He had to shift out of the way as Barbara moved to check the sergeant's vitals.

"What happened?" Her voice was sharp.

"No clue. Found him like this in his bed after he didn't show up to the morning meeting."

"Shit," was the accurate response.

A young nurse started herding the lieutenant back. "Please give us some space to work," the kid said.

Ghost was tempted to snap his neck. Instead he moved to the far corner, eyes never leaving the shaking form on the bed. An IV-drip was attached to Soap, while Barbara shone a small light in his eyes, muttering fast observations to her colleagues.

He should probably tell Price.

Scratch that. He should definitely *already* have told him.

Ghost was frozen in place for a few more seconds, before he sent a short text to the captain.

Medical. Come quick.

Utter helplessness was a foreign feeling to Ghost. Being a lieutenant meant there was always some course of action to take, some tough call to be made. Even when his men got injured, there was still a visible solution. Bind that, stitch that, burn that. Set that bone, pop that dislocation. Say your last words.

Whatever ailed Soap was *invisible* , and for some reason that tilted Ghost's world on its axis.

Hurried steps could be heard approaching, and next thing he knew Price was at his side, Garrick right behind him.

“What the hell is going on?”

Ghost tilted his head mutely towards the bed. Price visibly stiffened when he saw the state of his sergeant, and Gaz made a strange, winded noise.

“Found ‘im like that.” His voice felt disconnected from his body.

“What’s wrong with him?” Price sounded rough. All Ghost could do was shake his head in response. He knew as much as them.

It only took another minute before Barbara sucked in a sharp breath.

“What?” Ghost shoved uncaringly past the young nurse to see what had caused the reaction.

“Think we’ve found our culprit, captain,” she directed at Price, who

was right behind his lieutenant.

The bandages had been removed from Soap's abdomen, revealing the fresh cut and neat stitches. There was no sign of infection, no yellow tinting the pink. For all intents and purposes, it was healing nicely.

At least it would be, if it wasn't for the dark lines spreading from the wound like a web being spun under Johnny's skin.

"What the fuck is that?" Ghost hissed.

Barbara's lips were a tight line.

"That's poison."

Price cursed vehemently beside him, stepping back with a hand pinching the bridge of his nose. Gaz looked sick.

Ghost was using every amount of self restraint he possessed to stop himself from single-handedly going to Russia to hunt down Makarov.

"How do we fix him?"

Barbara regarded him like one would a wounded predator; cautious, uncertain of when he would lash out.

"We'll need to determine what poison was used. There are tests I can run, but the best would be if we had the knife. Of course..." She hesitated, still eyeing the looming lieutenant.

“What?” Gaz beat him to it, voice significantly milder than Ghost’s.

“I can’t guarantee his recovery. Some poisons work fast, and even if everything lines up perfectly and we recover the correct information and antivenom, there’s a risk it will be too late.”

“But he’s already lasted twelve hours,” Price spoke up, turning back to view them. “That must mean something.”

“It does rule out several poisons. Any of those would’ve gotten him during the night or even sooner.”

Unpleasant scenarios started playing in Ghost’s mind at that. Scenes of finding a corpse in Johnny’s room, or being unable to wake him from his nap on the helo. *Fuck* . He clenched his hands to keep them from trembling.

“Please say we brought that knife with us, captain.” There was a plea in Gaz’ question, as if he could wish it true.

Price shook his head, frustration clear on his features.

“Send me,” Ghost demanded. “Let me go get it-”

“Son, we have no idea what Makarov is playing at here. I’m not sending you blindly into-”

“I’m going to get that knife, and if Makarov tries to stop me I’ll kill him and every last one of his fanatics.”

“Simon.” Price’s voice was steel. “I agree that we need to get that knife, but we also need to plan our next move first.”

“You heard her, time is limited.” Ghost glared at Barbara, and she narrowed her eyes in return. It wasn’t her fault, he knew that, but he was just so *angry* -

A broken whine interrupted the rising voices, instantly catching the attention of the room’s occupants. Blue eyes were staring hazily at the ceiling, a feverish shine coating them.

“Johnny?” Ghost was next to the sergeant in a rush.

Even as Soap looked at him, it didn’t feel like he was actually *seeing* him. Simon still grabbed the hand that flailed weakly in his direction.

“M’warm. Burns,” was the slurred mumble. “Please, please-”

The sob that tore from Soap’s throat tugged at Ghost’s cold heart, like nothing else had in a long time.

“It’s okay, Johnny. You’ll be okay.” His anger lay forgotten as he gently shushed the whimpering man.

“I need- D’nnae leave me, please.”

“Never.” He tightened his grip on Soap’s hand. “I’m here.”

Tears welled in the eyes locked onto his mask, a spark of recognition flickering across the haggard face.

“Ghost,” Johnny gasped, tears falling. “Meet ye at... the ch’rch.”

Church? Oh .

“You’re not in Las Almas, Soap. You’re safe, at home.”

“N’ver been to Mexico bef’re.” Soap’s voice was weakening, bordering on inaudible and unintelligible.

Sweat slicked Ghost’s fingers when he ran a hand through the messy mohawk, his gloves left forgotten in the sergeant’s room.

“Keep fighting. We’re gonna fix this.”

“Keep yer blood in,” was the whispered response, eyelids drooping. “Need ev’ry drop.”

“Exactly, Johnny. Attaboy.”

Blue lips twitched into a faint smile, before Soap’s eyes rolled back, unconscious once more. Ghost let out a shaky sigh.

A firm hand settled on his shoulder, and he looked back at Price.

“You were right. We’re leaving to get that knife *now* ,” the captain growled.

When they found out there were more of Makarov’s men in the compound, Ghost was filled with a sick joy. He tore through them like his namesake, a vicious spirit dealing revenge for the injustice it had suffered.

“Tell me what poison your new soldiers use on their knives,” he sneered at his latest victim. The man below him sputtered jumbled Russian, eyes wide with fear. Ghost simply yelled in frustration as he slit the man’s throat, leaving the bastard to drown in his own blood, as he moved onto the next.

Price was only moderately less unhinged, leaving his own trail of bodies behind him. The two reconvened by the door to the room where Soap had been ambushed originally.

“They call them *змеи* , Makarov’s new soldiers. Means snakes.” Price put no lid on the disgust in his voice.

“They’re a well-kept secret,” Ghost added. “No one knew a damn thing, even those who wanted to tell me.”

The pair nodded grimly at each other. Ghost took point, kicking in the door.

Leaned over the body they came for, picking up the knife along with

some vials, was a person clad in similar clothes to the dead Snake on the ground. Their masked head snapped up, and Ghost dodged the knife that flew at him only by inches.

He then vaulted into the room, ignoring Price's shout behind him: "We've got the knife! Do not engage!"

The lieutenant let his own knives fly, but they were gracefully avoided. The Snake took in its opponent with a calculated look, before bolting. Ghost gave chase.

"Dammit, Ghost!"

Identifying the poison on the knife would take time, time Johnny possibly didn't have. This Snake, however, had all the information they didn't, and all Ghost needed to do was convince them to share with the class.

If he could catch the slippery fucker without either of them dying in the process, that was.

He could hear Price following behind him, but where the older man could be fast when he put his mind to it, he was still lagging behind. It had been a long time since anyone had kept pace with Ghost, but the figure ahead of him was managing it.

He had to get creative.

"Stay on the Snake!" he yelled at Price, before changing his own course.

There was a staircase leading downwards to the exit, their target currently taking the thing three steps at a time. Ghost could only hope he remembered the layout of the building correctly, having not seen it since before yesterday's mission. He darted through a corridor, losing

sight of the others. His legs and lungs were starting to burn, but it only served to fuel him as it stoked that fire of pure rage.

There it was, as he'd remembered: A side door leading to a balcony. He could only hope that luck was on his side, that the Snake planned to run this direction. The door flew open as Ghost barreled through, and something akin to glee writhed in him at the sight of his target coming his way, still unaware of his presence.

The leap of the balcony, and the aches he would suffer for days after, were all worth it as he landed on top of the startled opponent.

He wasted no time pinning the body beneath him before the other person could regain their senses. Price was with them in seconds, cool exterior somewhat compromised by his heaving gasps for air.

"Bloody Christ, Ghost," he marvelled, hands on his knees. "Well done, son."

Usually, Ghost was one to respect a mask, even on an enemy. Usually, Soap wasn't dying. *Maybe he was already-*

He ripped the black balaclava from the snake, revealing a pale woman looking up at him with pure venom. She spat something undoubtedly not nice at him in Russian, Price responding in kind with a voice like ice.

"Ask her about the fucking poison-"

"Already am, but she's being a smartass."

She said something then, smug, a tight smile stretching her features. Price lost it. A resounding crunch echoed in the cool afternoon air

when the captain's foot connected with the Snake's shin, causing her to shout in pain.

"What?" Ghost growled.

"She asked about Soap." Never had he seen the captain so angry. "Fucking- Fucking Makarov planned this, sent that first Snake simply to nick one of us."

Ghost saw red.

He took the knife from Price's belt, the one that had sliced Soap. Ghost revelled in the first glint of true fear in the Snake's cold eyes, as he held the blade to her ribs right next to her heart and pressed down. She started babbling pleas at the captain, but Price stood still as a statue. Steel split skin, and blood welled from the cut. The Snake screamed, not in pain, but in unadulterated terror.

Ghost handed the knife back to Price.

"Ask her about the poison again."

Soap was burning.

The world swam in and out of focus, time passing too fast for his understanding. He'd blink and the light in the room would be darker, the voices around him changing cadence, distorted by the buzzing in his ears.

The first time it was Ghost. He had stroked Soap's hair gently as he guided him through the streets of Las Almas again. Later he recognized Gaz' damp, brown eyes. He blinked, and then it was that serious furrow in Barbara's brow.

Roach's steadfast presence turned into König's nervous rambling turned into Alex' murmured reassurances. The whole team made rounds. He even glimpsed some of his recruits blurring into his vision at one point.

Mostly it was Gaz, though. Tired, wonderful Gaz who stayed with him through every convulsion, who wiped a cool, wet cloth over his face catching his tears.

He heard the word "poison". He didn't connect the dots for hours.

When he did, he knew he should be scared by how close the burn inside him was getting to his heart.

Everytime he woke, he couldn't help but writhe in a pitiful attempt to escape that which resided within his veins. He was grateful for friendly touches when that happened, even if they ignited his nerve endings even further.

He knew his flashes of near-clarity were missing something, *someone* , and a sense of hopelessness filled his body, joining the liquid fire.

Someone had promised they would stay, and they *weren't here* .

Until, finally, he was.

"Johnny."

Oh, he wanted to sob and cheer at hearing that voice again. The bloodied skull came into his scrambled world, dark eyes looking at

him with an intensity that even now made his heart skip a beat.

“Simon.” His voice was wrecked from screaming.

“I’m here.” More gentle touches, to his cheek this time. “I’m here now.”

“Said ye wouldn’e... leave,” he gasped.

Something pained entered Ghost’s demeanour. “I know. I’m so sorry. I promise I won’t leave again.”

“Stay w’ me?”

“Yes.” Ghost’s breath hitched uncharacteristically. “You’ll be okay now.”

“The antivenom will take effect soon,” another voice was saying, sounding far away. Soap didn’t look away from Ghost, and the dark eyes never strayed from his.

“Hear that? You’ll be fine, yeah?”

Soap nodded, not understanding what he was agreeing with, but Simon’s voice was trembling, so he didn’t really care.

“Miss’d y’.”

“Missed you too, Johnny. Rest. I’ll be here.”

Ghost knew it was unorthodox of him, but he was holding Soap’s hand.

The sergeant had been so terrified that he would leave again, that he hadn’t succumbed to sleep until their hands had interlocked, and now Ghost couldn’t bring himself to move, not even to change out of his dirty gear. It was earning him strange looks from the team, and an annoyingly knowing one from Price.

Both Price and Gaz were keeping vigil alongside him. Gaz was snoring from the second bed that had been rolled into the room, while the captain sat slumped in the chair opposite Ghost.

When they had returned, Garrick had broken down in Price’s arms, the events finally catching up with the young sergeant. From what Ghost gathered from the choked mumbling, it had been hell.

Johnny had been through hell.

He couldn’t help watching the Scot’s lax face like it would somehow disappear if he looked away. Maybe, just maybe, it wasn’t only for Soap’s sake that he wasn’t leaving.

It was a comfort that the hand in his own was no longer hot enough to scorch.

Barbara quietly entered the room. With focused eyes, she checked Soap over, making a pleased, little hum as she lifted the bandage from his cut.

“Status?” Price asked softly.

“It’s almost completely out of his system.” The older woman smiled for the first time since Ghost had carried Soap into the room. “I’ll need to monitor him, check for side effects, but he’ll live.”

Their response was a chorus of relieved sighs, Gaz even joining in from where he was waking up on the other cot.

“If you hadn’t arrived with the antivenom when you did...” Barbara trailed off, shaking her head.

Ghost didn’t need her to finish that sentence. He already knew what nightmares awaited him.

“Aye, braw timin’”

Ghost blinked, as the room held its breath for a second at the croaked voice. Then he locked eyes with blue, squeezing Soap’s hand.

“Fuckin’ hell,” the lieutenant whispered.

“Eloquent,” Johnny whispered with a crooked smile. Barbara descended on him instantly, pestering him with an avalanche of technical questions, which were answered by a hoarse voice. Gaz appeared with water, helping Soap drink.

“Thanks,” he said, sounding clearer, giving Gaz a gentle look. “Ye look like pure shite, mate.”

“I’ll find you a mirror, dickhead. I’ll have you know I didn’t sleep while I looked after your sorry arse.”

“I remember.” Soap lifted his free hand to lightly punch the other sergeant’s shoulder. Gaz swallowed harshly, before making room for the doctor as she returned.

“Thought I said I *didn’t* want to see you here again anytime soon,” Barbara scolded.

“Aye, my bad.” Soap apologised. “Technically it was the same injury, still only counts as three times this year.”

She grabbed his face, like a mother would her naughty child. “Don’t do this again, MacTavish.”

Johnny gulped. “Yes ma’am.”

“Now, believe it or not, I actually have other patients who have been wildly neglected.” Barbara picked up her bag. “Call me if anything changes.”

“Immediately,” Price reassured.

As she turned to leave, she paused to give one last order: “Oh, and make sure the idiot doesn’t make an escape. He’s been known to do

that.”

With that, she was gone. Soap’s cheeks were slightly red, a sheepish smile in place. Ghost was just happy to see healthy colour in his skin again.

Price leaned forward, resting a hand on Soap’s arm.

“How’re you feeling, son?”

“Honestly?” He leaned back into the pillows Gaz had propped up. “Like a truck ran me over, sir. Repeatedly. Wha’ happened?”

“Makarov’s twisted mind found a new way to fuck with us, to put it simply,” the captain explained, mouth pulling downwards when he said the name. “The soldier who cut you had a poisoned blade.”

Soap nodded weakly. “Makes sense.”

“He calls them Snakes,” Price continued. “Ghost and I went back for the blade, to identify the poison, so we could administer the correct antivenom-”

“Alone?” Johnny’s face fell. “What the hell?”

“You were dying,” Ghost finally spoke up.

“Aye, that’s nae reason for ye to do the same!”

“We didn’t die, so don’t make a fuss-”

“Ye could’ve! Amnae worth the risk-”

“Yes you are!” Ghost snapped. Soap fell silent, his mouth slightly open before he closed it with an audible click. A strange atmosphere fell around the four men. Price and Gaz shared an awkward glance.

“Besides,” Ghost pressed on, internally cursing his outburst. “It was important to figure out what Makarov was playing at. Now we know what poison is used.”

“Right,” Price agreed, still watching the pair carefully. “Turned out it was worse than we thought, actually.”

Soap seemed to collect himself. “How so?”

“The poison doesn’t exist, technically. It was a concoction made by Makarov’s men.”

“Wait, then how did ye get the antivenom?” Soap’s brow pinched in confusion.

“Lucky for you, Ghost is shite at following my orders.” Price ignored the protesting grunt directed at him. “The antivenom was in a Snake’s possession. I was planning on letting her get away, since we got the knife, but Ghost gave chase. Took her down expertly.”

Looking a tad overwhelmed by all that information, Johnny mulled over the words. Despite still seeming displeased that they'd risked themselves for him, he gave Ghost's hand a light squeeze.

"Thanks, Lt." Ghost returned the sincere gaze. It felt a bit like looking directly at the sun. "Looks like ye saved my sorry hide again."

Ghost could only nod, not trusting himself not to confess something vulnerable if he opened his mouth.

"Well, thanks to all of ye," Johnny corrected, smiling at Price and Gaz then.

"Just happy you're still with us, Soap," Price said. "Had us all scared for a hot minute."

"Not me," Gaz denied, eyes still red from crying over the Scot. Soap wheezed in surprise which turned into loud laughter, an infectious sound that had the others join in, even drawing a chuckle from Ghost.

"I say that vacation needs to happen soon, lads," Johnny concluded after catching his breath. "Although we're not going to the Bahamas if they have snakes."

End Notes

Still working on my other fic, but inspiration struck for this one and I churned it out in a day (which is probably why it's a bit of a mess lol)

I'd like to formally apologise to Soap. I promise I have nothing against him. He's my favourite, so he has to suffer :)

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